

A Nuptial Blessing + Father, by your power you have made everything out of nothing. In the beginning you created the universe and made mankind in your own likeness. You gave man the constant help of woman so that man and woman should no longer be two, but one flesh, and you teach us that what you have united may never be divided.

You have made the union of man and wife so holy a mystery that it symbolizes the marriage of Christ and his Church.

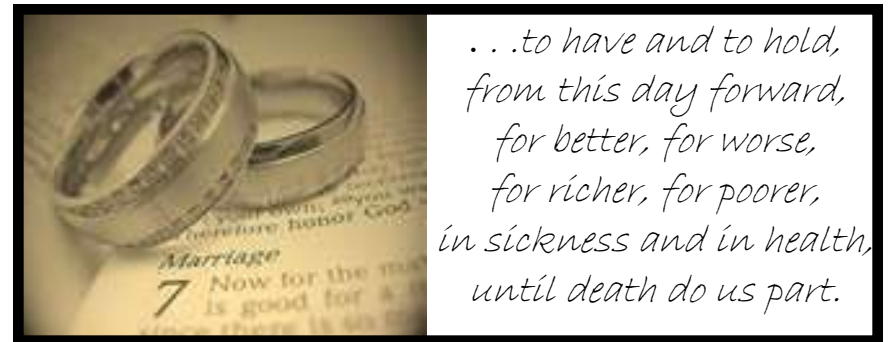


By your plan man and woman are united, and married life has been established as the one blessing that was not forfeited by original sin or washed away in the flood.

Father, keep them always true to your commandments. Keep them faithful in marriage and let them be living examples of Christian life. Give them the strength which comes from the gospel so that they may be witnesses of Christ to others. Bless them with children and help them to be good parents. May they live to see their children's children. And, after a happy old age, grant them fullness of life with the saints in the kingdom of heaven.



Celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage



*...to have and to hold,
from this day forward,
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
until death do us part.*

**Saints Peter & Paul Catholic Church
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So, you are planning to get married . . . Congratulations!

We are delighted you are considering Saints Peter and Paul Church as the place to begin your life together as husband and wife.

You are looking forward to all the events surrounding your wedding - the engagement, showers, rehearsal dinner, reception, and honeymoon. Each of these events plays a role in the celebration of a marriage. The liturgy, though, is the ritual center of Christian marriage. You will exchange your vows in an act of public worship; you will commit yourselves to each other in the presence of the people of God, the Church. The vows, prayers, scripture readings, giving and receiving of rings, and the nuptial blessing - all of these are for you and the gathered assembly, an expression of faith in God and in each other.
So let's celebrate!

You are not renting a church to host your wedding. You are asking the parish community to assist you in your marriage preparation. The purpose of this pre-marriage process is two-fold:

- 1) To discuss the Catholic Sacramental understanding of Marriage
- 2) To assist in the planning of a Catholic wedding

When a couple marries in the Catholic Church, it is considered to be not only a legal bond, but a sacramental bond. God is the one who brings the couple together and enables them to live a life of love, fidelity, and permanence. "What God has united, no one may ever divide", is proclaimed once the husband and wife give their consent to this union.

A sacrament is never a private affair since it is a proclamation of God's life and presence in this union. Marriage as a sacrament proclaims the central role that Jesus has in the life of the couple. In this sacrament, we celebrate your love for each other and the new commitment that you are making before Christ and the Church.

You are called to be a living sign of the love you have for each other to your family, friends, community, and the children you bring forth into this world.

The sacrament of marriage is a religious ritual that centers, not just on the couple, but on the entire community. While the wedding liturgy celebrates the love of the couple, it is more fully the prayer and praise of all who gather.

It is our hope and prayer as you enter into this time of preparation that it will bring you closer to God and that He will enrich your relationship as intended spouses from the very first day.

Who are the facilitators of your Marriage preparation?

- ⇒ Fr. Tom Brown, Pastor, will meet with you to discuss the marriage preparation program, facilitate sessions, plan the wedding liturgy, and will conduct the wedding rehearsal.
- ⇒ Whitney Crooks, Director of Music, will assist you in planning the musical details of your wedding liturgy.

What are the necessary steps to complete Marriage preparation?

- 1) Make an appointment with Fr. Tom to discuss the preparation program, possible wedding dates, expectations of the couple, and to begin paperwork. Couples will also complete a premarital inventory assessment, as individuals. Should one or both persons entering into marriage have been married previously, an annulment must be obtained from the diocese before the wedding can be scheduled.
- 3) Register for a Pre-Cana class. A schedule of classes can be found on the Grand Rapids Diocese website at www.grdiocese.org.
- 4) Contact Whitney Crooks to discuss music details for your wedding liturgy.

